integrated nutrient management for maintaining soil health and productivity.

(b) The Government has decided on 5.9.02 to close down the entire Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation including its Fertilizer Promotion and Agricultural Research Division (FP & ARD) as the same was not found to be techno-economically viable.

(c) and (d) There is no proposal to take over any of the Bio-fertilizer units by the Ministry of Agriculture. However, regarding Krishi Vigyan Kendras under HFC, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research is setting up a Committee to decide about the appropriate organization to whom these can be transferred.

Drought in A.P.

346. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether nine-member Central team visited Hyderabad, to assess the damage caused to crops and loss of employment to agriculture labour, as a result of severe drought in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether the team has since given its report to Government and if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action taken so far, on the recommendations made by the Central team and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether any amount has been released so far, to the State from the National Calamity Contingency Fund and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (d) Based on the findings of the Central Team and the recommendations of the Inter Ministerial Group, the High Level Committee has approved an amount of Rs.174.61 crores, as admissible to the State

Government. Assistance from the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) will, however, be subject to adjustment of balances available in the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) of the State.

Loan to farmers in drought hit areas

347. SHRI H.K. JAVARE GOWDA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the current year drought is very widespread and worst in the past 50 years and worst sufferers are farmers;

(b) if so, the details of farmers/people affected loss of money and cattle in the country, State-wise;

(c) whether the farmers are provided with additional crop loans by NABARD and othe Co-operation and Regional Banks to the drought hit people; and

(d) if so, the details of additional crop loans advanced, State-wise.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (d) The current drought is of a very severe nature. As this stage, it is difficult to assess the mor etary losses suffered on account of drought. In 15 States, however, 358 districts have been declared as drought affected and the rural population in these States is regarded as affected by drought situation.

NABARD has advised the Cooperative Banks and Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) to provide additional crop loan at enhanced scales of finance for fresh sowing operations. As advised by NABARD, Banks have sanctioned additional crop loan at enhanced scales of finance for fresh sowing operations. The details of refinance